

Appl. No. 09/746,611

Attorney Docket No. 10022/24

Response to Office Action mailed April 20, 2004

Response transmitted July 19, 2004

This list replaces all previous versions and listings of the claims in this application.

1. (Currently amended) A method of evaluating a business proposal, comprising the steps of:

gathering information ~~on~~ relevant to the proposal, wherein the information comprises revenue elements of the proposal, risks, descriptive information, business issues, business goals, a value of the proposal, a cost of the proposal, methods of achievement of the proposal, and an innovation value of the proposal, and wherein the proposal ~~is structured as two or more~~ includes at least two structures selected from the group consisting of an alliance, an acquisition, an equity venture, a partnership, and a venture;

~~accessing information on similar or analogous proposals;~~

evaluating the gathered information by computer; and

ranking the at least two structures according to the evaluation of the gathered information.

2. (Currently amended) The method of Claim 1, wherein information gathered further comprises at least one of business environmental information, ~~business issues and goals, financial information, and methods of achievement of the proposal~~ revenue drivers, business risks, and legal liabilities.

3. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein the information gathering step further comprises answering predetermined questions on at least one template stored in a computer and the answers to at least one predetermined question call up at least one more template of predetermined questions, and the computer uses answers to said questions to evaluate the proposal.

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4. (Currently amended) The method of Claim 1, wherein the proposals are evaluated by calculating at least one of a ~~cost~~, a revenue stream, a return on average assets, a return on investment, a return on equity, and internal rate of return, and a net present value.

5. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 1, further comprising evaluating risks of the proposal as high or as normal.

6. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 1, further comprising choosing an input into the computer by a radio-button technique.

7. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 1, further comprising displaying the rankings with a graphical user interface.

8. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 7, wherein the rankings are presented in a Harvey-ball format.

9. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 1 wherein the rankings are displayed in a graphical user interface in a numerical format.

10. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein the cost of the proposal is calculated as a revenue stream to a service provider.

11. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 10, further comprising the step of calculating a benefit to a customer of providing said service to said customer.

12. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein the information is input to the computer through a graphical user interface by choosing selections from at least one of a drop-down screen, a scroll screen, a check box, and a list box.

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13. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 12, wherein the graphical user interface uses a technique selected from the group consisting of a drop-down selector screen, a scroll screen, and a check box.

14. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein the proposal comprises an offer of a service from a provider, and further comprising the step of calculating a way to pay for the proposal.

15. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein the structures are ranked by displaying a numerical output.

16. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein the information is provided through a graphical user interface, and the input is in a form of brief numerical or pseudo-numerical outputs.

17. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 1, wherein an output is provided through a graphical user interface, and the output is in a form of brief numerical or pseudo-numerical outputs.

18. (Currently amended) A method of evaluating a business proposal, comprising:

searching at least one database for information concerning a business partner, the proposal and a business environment, wherein the information includes cost drivers, revenue drivers, markets served, risks of the proposal, customers served, and a competitive advantage;

providing financial data concerning the proposal to a computer, wherein the financial data includes revenue elements of the proposal, a cost of the proposal, and an innovation value of the proposal;

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proposing at least two structures for the business proposal, using said financial data and information from the database, wherein the structures are selected from the group consisting of an alliance, an acquisition, an equity venture, a partnership, and a venture; and

calculating an advantage of the structures based on the searched-for information and the provided financial data.

19. (Original) The method of Claim 18, wherein the database comprises a client relationship repository of information.

20. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 18, further comprising evaluating risks of the proposal as high or as normal and receiving an input of a risk evaluation through a graphical user interface.

21. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 18, wherein the step of providing financial data comprises retrieving financial data from at least one database.

22. (Currently amended) The method of Claim 18, further comprising the step of entering information concerning strength of a business relationship by entering a number from 1 to 5, ~~for use by the computer in~~ and wherein the step of calculating the advantage of the ~~structure~~ structures is based on the entered information concerning the strength of a business relationship.

23. (Original) The method of Claim 22, wherein the information is entered through at least one template stored in the computer.

24. (Original) The method of Claim 23, wherein the information entered through at least one template calls up at least one template of predetermined questions, and the computer uses answers to said questions to evaluate the proposal.

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25. (Currently amended) The method of Claim 18, wherein the advantage is calculated as at least one of a cost, a revenue stream, a return on average assets, a return on investment, a return on equity, an internal rate of return, and a net present value.

26. (Original) The method of Claim 18, wherein the advantage is calculated as at least one revenue stream and includes at least one example of how to pay for the proposal.

27. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 18, further comprising the step of ranking each structure.

28. (Original) The method of Claim 18, wherein the advantage is recalculated by a step of entering updated data into the computer.

29. (Original) The method of Claim 18, wherein the step of searching comprises a search of at least one Internet site, and further comprising the steps of updating the search periodically, and updating the computer calculation of an advantage periodically.

30. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 18, wherein the information is provided through a graphical user interface.

31. (Previously presented) The method of Claim 18, further comprising a step of providing an output through a graphical user interface.

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32. (Currently amended) A computer system for evaluating a proposal, comprising:

a computer processor;

at least one memory operably connected to said computer, said memory containing data relevant to the proposal, wherein the data comprises revenue elements of the proposal, risks, descriptive information, business issues, business goals, a value of the proposal, a cost of the proposal, methods of achievement of the proposal, and an innovation value of the proposal; and

a computer program ~~for evaluating the proposal, said program~~ residing in said computer or in said memory, wherein the proposal includes a plurality of structures selected from the group consisting of an alliance, an acquisition, an equity venture, a partnership, and a venture, and the computer program ~~calculates~~ is configured for calculating and generating an output helpful for evaluating the plurality of structures based on said data relevant to the proposal.

33. (Currently amended) The computer system of Claim 32, wherein the computer program ~~further comprises~~ is configured for generating a graphical user interface for at least one of inputting or outputting information.

34. (Previously presented) The computer system of Claim 32 wherein the computer program output is a series of numerical ratings from 1 to 5.

35. (Original) The computer system of Claim 32 wherein the computer program further comprises at least one template of predetermined questions, and the computer program uses the answers to said questions to evaluate the proposal.

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36. (Currently amended) The computer system of Claim 32 wherein the answers to at least one predetermined question call up at least one more template of predetermined questions, and the computer program ~~uses~~ is configured to evaluate the proposal based on the answers to said questions ~~to evaluate the proposal.~~

37. (Previously presented) The computer system of Claim 32 wherein the output is a series of Harvey balls.

38. (Original) The computer system of Claim 32, wherein the computer program uses a technique of control-action-response in seeking and inputting information from a user of the computer system.